

# MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW.

Editor: Prof. CLEVELAND ABBE.

VOL. XXVI.

MAY, 1898.

No. 5

## INTRODUCTION.

The MONTHLY WEATHER REVIEW for May, 1898, is based on 2,945 reports from stations occupied by regular and voluntary observers, classified as follows: 147 from Weather Bureau stations; numerous special river stations; 32 from post surgeons, received through the Surgeon General, United States Army; 2,583 from voluntary observers; 96 received through the Southern Pacific Railway Company; 29 from Life-Saving stations, received through the Superintendent United States Life-Saving Service; 31 from Canadian stations; 20 from Mexican stations; 7 from Jamaica, W. I. International simultaneous observations are received from a few stations and used, together with trustworthy newspaper extracts and special reports.

Special acknowledgment is made of the hearty cooperation of Prof. R. F. Stupart, Director of the Meteorological Service of the Dominion of Canada; Mr. Curtis J. Lyons, Meteorologist at the Hawaiian Government Survey, Honolulu; Dr. Mariano Bárcena, Director of the Central Meteorological and Magnetic Observatory of Mexico; Mr. Maxwell Hall, Government Meteorologist, Kingston, Jamaica; Capt. S. I. Kim-

ball, Superintendent of the United States Life-Saving Service; and Commander J. E. Craig, Hydrographer, United States Navy.

The REVIEW is prepared under the general editorial supervision of Prof. Cleveland Abbe.

Attention is called to the fact that the clocks and self-registers at regular Weather Bureau stations are all set to seventy-fifth meridian or eastern standard time, which is exactly five hours behind Greenwich time; as far as practicable, only this standard of time is used in the text of the REVIEW, since all Weather Bureau observations are required to be taken and recorded by it. The standards used by the public in the United States and Canada and by the voluntary observers are believed to generally conform to the modern international system of standard meridians, one hour apart, beginning with Greenwich. Records of miscellaneous phenomena that are reported occasionally in other standards of time by voluntary observers or newspaper correspondents are sometimes corrected to agree with the eastern standard; otherwise, the local meridian is mentioned.

## FORECASTS AND WARNINGS.

By PARK MORRILL, Forecast Official and Chief of Forecast Division.

There were few marked departures from normal conditions during the month of May. Only one storm of any severity visited the Atlantic coast, that of the 5-8th, a more detailed account of which appears below, prepared by Mr. J. H. Harmon of this Division. Severe thunderstorms occurred in the upper Mississippi Valley on the 17th and 18th, as reported by Prof. E. B. Garriott, in charge of the Chicago Forecast District. Frosts continued at frequent intervals in the Northwest during the first half of the month, but during the latter part occurred only in the elevated districts of the Rocky Mountains. On the 6th the low temperatures in the upper Mississippi Valley and the Lake regions indicated the probability of frosts in the Ohio Valley, and a warning of their probable occurrence was issued; they occurred only at more exposed points. The river forecasts on the Pacific coast are of special value at this season for reasons explained in the report of Mr. B. S. Pague, in charge of the North Pacific Forecast District. The various areas of high and low pressure which appeared on our weather maps during the month are discussed below by Prof. H. A. Hazen. A résumé of the condition of the various rivers is given as prepared by Mr. F. W. Krichelt of this Division, and is accompanied by a table of river stages.

### WIND SIGNALS.

On May 5 a trough of low pressure extended from Texas northeastward to New Jersey and the Atlantic coast, and

during the day a storm of moderate intensity developed over Tennessee and western North Carolina. On the 6th the center remained stationary on the North Carolina coast, and during the 7th the storm increased slightly in severity, dominating the weather from Cape Hatteras to Boston until the 9th. In advance of this storm information signals were hoisted from Wilmington to Nantucket and on the 6th, as the wind increased, the signals were changed to southwest storm from Morehead, N. C., to Baltimore, Md., and to northeast storm along the northern coast to Nantucket. On the 8th, as the storm developed a slow easterly movement and gained in energy, northeast storm signals were displayed from Delaware Breakwater to Boston section, and information signals farther south to Hatteras.

During the progress of the storm the following maximum velocities were reported:

Memphis, 40; Cairo, 36; Louisville, 30; Nashville, 36; Knoxville, 48; Augusta, 38; Atlanta, 34; Chattanooga, 32; Atlantic City, 42; Cape May, 30; Philadelphia, 42; New York City, 38; Block Island, 72; Nantucket, 40; Boston, 36; New Haven, 45; Sandy Hook, 56; Cape Henry, 38; Hatteras, 36.

### THUNDERSTORM FORECASTS.

The severest storms of the month in the Chicago forecasting district occurred in Nebraska on the afternoon of the 17th, and in eastern Iowa, northern Illinois, and Wisconsin on the after-

noon and night of the 18th. The storms of the 17th in Nebraska appear to have been most severe in the Wood River Valley, where many houses were reported destroyed and a number of people were injured. On the morning of the 17th thunderstorms were forecast for the States of the lower Missouri Valley, and observers were advised that severe storms would probably occur in that section.

The storms of the afternoon and night of the 18th were especially disastrous in eastern Iowa, northern Illinois, and Wisconsin, where a number of people were killed, many injured, and property and stock were destroyed to the value of many thousands of dollars. On the morning of the 18th severe thunderstorms were forecast for eastern Iowa, northern Illinois, northern Indiana, and southern Minnesota. Shipping on Lake Michigan was warned of heavy squalls that would attend thunderstorms on the night of the 18th, and the Chicago local forecast also gave warning of severe thunderstorms that night. Exceptionally severe thunderstorms and squalls did occur in Chicago and over southern Lake Michigan in exact fulfillment of the forecasts made.

#### FORECASTS ON PACIFIC COAST.

During the month no wind signals were ordered and there were no storms. The most important work done by the Bureau in the Pacific northwest is through the river forecasts. More property and expense are saved by the river forecasts than by any other work done by this office. The forecasts are practically accurate. They cover the movements of the river for from two to five days. On the morning of May 20 a warning was issued to the effect that water would enter cellars on Front street, Portland, on Sunday. The merchants put many persons to work clearing out cellars, and no goods were injured by water. The river rose as was expected.

The following letter from Mr. F. C. Mathews, a rancher at Scott, Klickitat County, Wash., shows of what value the river service may be. He had written to the office of the Weather Bureau at Portland, Oreg., for information about the river, stating that his hay crop was in danger. He again writes under date of May 29, 1898:

The daily river bulletins, also your letter of the 27th inst., have been duly received. The bulletins are of inestimable value to me and, accompanied by your letter of additional explanation and suggestion, enabled me to save my hay crop and avoid unnecessary work on overflowed land. I disseminated the information received up and down the river and posted the bulletins where they would be seen by other ranchers.

#### AREAS OF HIGH AND LOW PRESSURES.

During the month the paths of nine areas of high and the same number of low pressure have been sufficiently well defined to be traced upon Charts I and II. It should be noted that during the warm months it is often very difficult to follow the motion of a high or low. The conditions are often extremely indefinite and are frequently characterized by a disturbed region covering quite a large area with clouds but with little clearness in the trend of the isobars. Again, there seems to be a transference of these conditions over long distances without any definite motion. The accompanying table gives the principal facts regarding the place of origin and disappearance of these highs and lows, and of their duration and velocity, and the following description is added:

**Highs.**—Three of the highs were first noted on the Pacific coast while all the rest came down from the north of Montana. No. VIII began off the south Pacific coast and appeared to move up the coast for two days, finally entering the country from the Washington coast. Only three of the highs reached the Atlantic, the rest disappearing in the interior or being merged in the rather permanent high pressure over the Gulf of Mexico.

**Lows.**—Two of the lows could be traced from the south Pacific coast to the western Gulf of Mexico. Four were first noted over the northern plateau region and the other three were first seen in the lower Missouri Valley. Six of these lows disappeared off the Atlantic coast, two in the western Gulf, and one in the Ohio Valley. These conditions were very moderate throughout the month and their mean velocity, 19 miles an hour, was considerably less than the normal velocity. The highest winds of the month along the Gulf, Lakes, and Atlantic were reported as follows:

As low No. II moved to the Atlantic, Wilmington reported 38 miles an hour from the southwest on the evening of the 6th, and on the same date Cape Henry had the same velocity from the northeast. As this same low moved very slowly up the coast it caused a northeast wind of 72 miles per hour at Block Island on the afternoon of the 8th. On the afternoon of the 19th as low No. VI moved into the St. Lawrence Valley a southwest wind of 48 miles was experienced at Cleveland, Ohio. On the afternoon of the 21st, as low No. VII moved to the upper Lake region, Chicago reported a south wind of 46 miles an hour.

#### Movements of centers of areas of high and low pressure.

Number.	First observed.			Last observed.			Path.		Average velocities.	
	Date.	Lat. N.	Long. W.	Date.	Lat. N.	Long. W.	Length.	Duration.	Daily.	Hourly.
<b>High areas.</b>										
I.....	*29. a.m.	54	113	2. a.m.	43	104	1,020	3.0	340	14.2
II.....	2. a.m.	53	112	9. a.m.	29	80	3,660	7.0	521	21.7
III.....	7. a.m.	47	129	11. p.m.	28	95	2,490	4.5	553	23.0
IV.....	11. a.m.	50	114	14. a.m.	39	81	2,040	3.0	680	28.3
V.....	13. a.m.	53	110	19. p.m.	39	75	2,970	6.5	457	19.0
VI.....	19. a.m.	51	100	23. a.m.	47	58	2,550	4.0	638	26.6
VII.....	19. a.m.	43	127	22. a.m.	32	99	1,980	3.0	660	27.5
VIII.....	21. p.m.	34	123	†1. p.m.	32	79	5,610	11.0	510	21.3
IX.....	23. p.m.	53	98	25. a.m.	49	83	990	2.5	396	16.5
Total.....							23,310	44.5	4,755	.....
Mean of 9 tracks.....							2,590		528	22.0
Mean of 44.5 days.....									524	21.8
<b>Low areas.</b>										
I.....	1. a.m.	32	119	5. p.m.	26	99	1,830	4.5	407	17.0
II.....	4. p.m.	34	96	8. a.m.	39	73	1,710	3.5	489	20.4
III.....	4. p.m.	48	122	15. p.m.	48	55	4,560	11.0	415	17.3
IV.....	6. a.m.	32	116	10. p.m.	26	96	1,470	4.5	327	13.6
V.....	12. p.m.	41	117	16. p.m.	38	86	1,710	4.0	428	17.8
VI.....	14. p.m.	46	119	20. p.m.	51	65	3,240	6.0	540	22.5
VII.....	18. p.m.	38	100	26. a.m.	34	74	2,910	7.5	388	16.2
VIII.....	25. p.m.	45	101	30. a.m.	48	65	2,220	4.5	493	20.5
IX.....	26. p.m.	47	119	30. p.m.	36	73	2,850	4.0	712	29.7
Total.....							22,500	49.5	4,199	.....
Mean of 9 tracks.....							2,500		467	19.4
Mean of 49.5 days.....									455	18.9

\* April.

† June.

#### RIVERS AND FLOODS.

With the exception of a flood in the Arkansas during the first half of the month, the rivers had a tendency to lower stages, which indicates the approach of the usual summer conditions.

General and heavy precipitation during the first few days of the month, in the valleys drained by the Arkansas River and its tributaries, caused a rapid and unusual rise in that stream. The danger line at Little Rock was passed on the 6th and was exceeded on ten consecutive days thereafter.

During this flood the high water record at Fort Smith and Dardanelle, Ark., was broken. At Fort Smith, the highest of record, heretofore, was 30.9 feet, which occurred May 19, 1892, and at Dardanelle the highest of record was 27.9 feet, which occurred May 18, 1892. During the flood of the present year the water at Fort Smith and Dardanelle registered 35.4 and 29.3 feet, respectively.